







OXFORD OR ROME?

A LETTER

TO

THE REV. J. H. NEWMAN,

ON No. 90.

OF THE

"TRACTS FOR THE TIMES."

BY AN ENGLISH CATHOLIC.

SECOND EDITION.

"Under which King, Bezonian? Speak, or die!"—SHAKSPEARE.

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## A LETTER,

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REVEREND SIR,

You now stand before the world as the acknowledged author of the 90th number of the "Tracts for the Times." I therefore make no apology for addressing personally to you a few observations, which have been suggested to me by the perusal of that most remarkable, and allow me to add, startling document.

In thus venturing to enter the lists with you, in the arena of polemical discussion, I am well aware that I run no small risk of being charged with presumption. You are the avowed and revered leader of a powerful and daily increasing body, either *in* or *out* of the church;—you are practised in controversy, skilled in casuistical niceties, and deeply read in all the most recondite lore of ecclesiastical history and tradition.

Your talents no man ventures to dispute; your private worth is fully, though reluctantly, acknowledged by the fiercest of your opponents; and your position in the University of Oxford entitles you alike to the worldly observance which attends on exalted station, and to the deference usually paid to high spiritual authority. I, on the other hand, am but a plain, obscure, and unlearned layman,—an humble adherent to the ancient faith of Christendom; and, as a necessary consequence, exposed to every battery of religious and political prejudice, which the rancour and madness of the times direct with unwearied perseverance, against the professors of the Catholic religion.

These, Sir, are fearful odds in your favour; nor should I be rash enough to encounter them in a cause less righteous, or on points depending for their decision on the weight of our respective authorities. But, Sir, without here repeating the beautiful and well-known simile employed by Bacon, to illustrate the relative powers of assertion and argument, it is enough to say that, as an individual of a class whom you and yours systematically malign and misrepresent, I am fully justified in repelling your calumnious attacks, and exposing your misrepresentation; and fortunately for the interests of truth and justice, your own pamphlet, while it conveys, or more often perhaps *insinuates*, the untrue charge, supplies, in many instances, the direct means of triumphant refutation.

I need hardly remind you, Sir, that you have fallen under a very general and vehement suspicion of lean-



ing towards that particular mode of faith which your low-church assailants call “*Popery*,” which your own disciples insultingly term “*Romanism*,” which the laws and legislature of your country are content to designate as “the Roman Catholic,” but which *we*, who *openly* profess it, assert to be the *Catholic* religion. Undoubtedly, Sir, as far as these imputed opinions, or tendencies of opinion, may be supposed to affect your orthodoxy as a clergyman of the Established Church, or your fitness to administer her rites and sacraments, I should have no concern with the matter, and might fairly leave you to the indulgent forbearance of your own ecclesiastical superiors. That you should deem it consistent with your station in the Church of England to sanction by your writings a belief in some of the most unpopular doctrines of the Catholic Church, is no doubt a subject of surprise to the members of our communion. But however we might wonder, *we*, at least, should have no right to reproach you ; nor could your equivocal position afford *us* any ground of complaint, had the question rested here. But, Sir, we *have* a right to complain, and we *do* complain, that in order to screen yourself in the adoption of *our* tenets, from the obloquy and ruin that your profession of them, *as ours*, would undoubtedly entail upon you, you deliberately distort and misrepresent our faith and practice ; —that in order to avert the impending storm of Protestant ire from your own devoted head, you erect a counterfeit image of “*Romanism*,” to serve as an ecclesiastical *lightning - conductor*, and thus secure to

yourself the undisturbed enjoyment of that very orthodoxy, which, *in us*, you would gladly see reprobated, and perhaps punished as heresy or dissent.

This, Sir, is, I admit, strong language, and conveys, unquestionably, more of compliment to your ingenuity than to your candour. But when you refer to your own pages in Tract No. 90, and there see that you have unhesitatingly and repeatedly charged on the Roman Catholic Church at the present day, doctrines and practices with regard to *relics, images, invocations of saints, &c.* which are *expressly disavowed, repudiated and condemned by those very decrees of the Council of Trent, which you yourself cite*, it is impossible to contend that the accusation I bring against you is unjust or unfounded. You are not, you *cannot be* ignorant that the decrees of the Council of Trent, in the matters referred to, are universally received in the Roman Catholic Church, as the authoritative enunciation of the orthodox belief and practice. You know well, and I defy you to deny it, that any Roman Catholic, or person professing himself a Roman Catholic, who pays to images or relics, &c., any higher degree of veneration than such as is sanctioned by the decrees of that council, is *ipso facto*, guilty of a departure from the Roman Catholic faith, and, as such, is liable to the highest ecclesiastical censures. You know perfectly well that the decrees of the Council of Trent are the very measure or standard of faith with us, on all points of dispute between the Catholic and Reformed churches; and that you cannot receive the canons of that council,



in matters of faith, without subscribing to every tenet which the Roman Catholic holds to be essential to orthodoxy.

It is in vain, therefore, that you strive, cautiously and warily, indeed, but still in a manner sufficiently intelligible, to prove that there is nothing in the Thirty-nine Articles, really inconsistent with the Council of Trent; but that "Romanism," or "Romish" tenets are alone condemned by those articles. This is a contradiction in terms. If you can only establish the fact that the acceptance of the decrees of Trent is consistent with a belief in the Thirty-nine articles, there is not a Roman Catholic in England, Ireland, or Scotland, from his Grace of Norfolk down to your humble correspondent, who may not subscribe these articles, with a safe and easy conscience! If it be not the Roman Catholic, but merely the "Romish" doctrines which are abjured in the articles, and if by "Romish errors," we are to understand *the very errors which the Roman Catholic Church has herself condemned, cadit quæstio*, between the two churches, and there is no reason why we should not be all "Catholics" together in good earnest.

But it is right that I should enter into particulars; and for this purpose I will take a cursory view of the different sections of your tract, as they occur *seriatim*.

I have nothing to say against your interpretation of articles VI. and XX. They are, as cited by you, very felicitous illustrations of that character of controversial elasticity, which, according to your hypothesis, (p. 81 of Tract No. 90, 2nd ed.) the framers of

the articles were desirous of impressing on these formularies of their faith. As all denominations of Christians affect to prove their religion from Scripture, and would indignantly repel the charge of inculcating anything contrary thereto, these imposing generalities of doctrine might probably be adjusted to fit the views of any given communion. Your reasoning with regard to the authority of the Church in the interpretation of Scripture (pp. 7, 8, et seq.) is perfectly fair, and unassailable by those who prate about the visionary "*right of private judgment.*" No such right ever did or ever *could* exist in the Church of England, or any other religious communion inculcating particular modes of belief. If you are a member of any Church, you must, *ex vi termini*, receive every doctrine which she lays down as *essential* to an admission into her pale. If, in the exercise of your "private judgment" on the matters which she proposes for your acceptance as articles of faith, you are obliged to differ from her, you have ceased, *ipso facto*, to be of her communion. This is equally true of Catholic, Protestant, Presbyterian, Quaker, and Socinian. It is a self-evident proposition; and those who dispute it might as well contend that parallel lines can cross each other, or that the whole is not equal to the parts. The opposite doctrine, however, absurd as it is, finds many strenuous supporters, abounding in zeal, but needy in logic, among that class of religionists whose Protestantism consists merely in rejecting what they call "Popery"—the advocates, as it were, of "*exclusive*



*damnation*," who seem to think that every ecclesiastical road which leads *from* Rome must, *ex necessitate*, lead *to* Heaven.

But I am well aware that these absurdities could never be justly charged on the orthodox members of the Church of England; and I freely acknowledge that you are justified in the assertion, that "in the sense in which it is commonly understood at this day, Scripture is *not*, on Anglican principles, the rule of faith." (p. 11.)

I now come to your remarks on the 11th article, which relates to "justification by faith alone." (p. 12.) Your explanation of this is most skilful, and exhibits a degree of ingenuity which would have done honour to the *Sorbonne* or the *Oratoire* in the palmiest and most casuistical days of those renowned congregations. I shall content myself, however, with observing that, if such be the orthodox interpretation of the 11th Article, so much the better! Were I a member of the Church of England, the suggestion would be a great relief to my mind, by saving me from the difficulties of the rigid Calvinistic doctrine which the article certainly *seems* to inculcate. I am perfectly convinced, however, that no intelligible difference has really ever existed between the *practical* belief of the Church of England and the Catholics on this point.

The remarks on Articles XII. and XIII. (p. 14,) may be dismissed without comment. What I have said in reference to Section 2, applies in great measure to this point.



In Sections 4 and 5 (pp. 17, 21), you treat of the “visible Church,” (art. 19.) and of “general councils,” (art. 21.) These articles certainly seem drawn up on the judicious *India-rubber* system above adverted to ; and I am not prepared to say that they may not admit of your explanation. No doubt, “the visible Church of Christ” is “a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered.” What is “the pure word of God,” and what “the due administration” of the sacraments, are distinct enquiries. So, the assertion that general councils “may err and have erred in things pertaining to God,” may be reconciled with their asserted infallibility in matters of *faith*, by the explanation that they have made, from time to time, injudicious regulations on points of ecclesiastical discipline, which, in a sense, are certainly “things pertaining to God.” I am happy to collect, from the tenor of your observations, although you do not assert it in direct terms, that you agree with me in thinking that a general council, when deciding authoritatively on speculative points of religious belief, never *can err*. “General councils,” you say, (p. 21) “may err . . . . unless in any case it is promised as a matter of express supernatural privilege, that they shall *not* err—a case which is beyond the scope of this Article, or, at any rate, beside its determination. Such a promise, however, *does* exist in cases where general councils are not only gathered together according to the commandment and will of princes, but in the name of Christ, accord-

ing to our Lord's promise . . . . While councils are a thing of earth, their infallibility of course is not guaranteed ; when they are a thing of Heaven, their deliberations are over-ruled, and their decrees authoritative. In such cases, they are *Catholic* councils." p. 21.

Why, Sir, all this is, as far as it goes, as Catholic as the Pope. It is to be regretted, however, that you have not thought it expedient to determine what are the "*conditions* which fulfil the notion of a gathering in the name of Christ." (p. 22.) The six earliest councils, it seems, are entitled to this distinction, even according to the Homilies. (p. 21.) There is thus no doubt whatever about Nice or Chalcedon. But it would be a great satisfaction if you would favour us with your private opinion concerning Trent. That you have some respect for its deliberations, is pretty evident from the fact of your quoting its decrees in favour of your own views, and in support of your own statements. *If it erred in matters of faith*, what, according to your views, was the defect of constitution *which rendered it liable to error*? And if it *did not err*, why do you hesitate to avow your belief in its catholicity?

I now come, Sir, to your 6th section, (p. 33), that portion of your tract which contains the most novel and ingenious attempts at evading the obvious meaning of words, and excuse me if I add, the most palpable departure from candour and fair argument, in dealing with the doctrines of your Catholic brethren. The text is Art. 22. "The Romish doctrine concerning



purgatory, pardons, worshippings and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God."

Now, Sir, I would fearlessly put it to the common sense of any reasonable man, accustomed to judge of the meaning of a writer by the natural import of the language in which his sentiments are conveyed, whether the plain and obvious signification of this article be not that "purgatory, pardons, worshipping of images, &c., and invocations of saints," which, according to the framer, are "Romish doctrines," are vain inventions, &c.? If the framers of this article had meant, according to your interpretation, to draw a distinction between the *Romish* and the *Catholic* doctrine concerning these several matters, by representing the former as heretical and the latter as orthodox, implying that these points of faith or practice were to be assented to and followed in the sense and degree sanctioned by the early Church, but not in the mode or spirit recognised or displayed in the Church of Rome, —if they were cautiously abstaining from a condemnation of doctrines such as the Council of Trent has since clearly defined, and directing their censures against the heterodox abuse of those doctrines, *amounting to absolute idolatry*, which you uncharitably and unjustifiably persist in charging upon us, *in the teeth of those very decrees* whose infallibility we acknowledge and boldly proclaim, —if, I say, *this* had been the object of the divines



who framed the 22nd article, would they, think you, have contented themselves with stigmatizing such practices as “fond,” *and* rather (than otherwise) repugnant to the word of God? Would they have hesitated to characterize as downright idolatry “all maintenance of those idolatrous honours which,” (according to your *mild* and *charitable* expression,) “have been and *are* paid them so commonly throughout the Church of Rome, with the superstitions, *profanities* and *impurities* (!) consequent thereupon.” (p. 36.) Would they have merely treated as “rather repugnant to the word of God,” the maintenance of addresses to the saints, which entrench upon the “incommunicable honor due to God alone,” such as you assert to be *actually taught* in the church of Rome?

Assuredly, Sir, these zealous reformers would have thought it their duty to draw the distinction, if they had admitted its existence; but their object was to involve in one sweeping condemnation the *use* and the abuse of the several practices described. These they undoubtedly mis-stated and overcharged, as might be expected from the spirit and temper of the times; but, in this instance, although probably somewhat inferior in *faith* to their official successors in modern Oxford, whose belief has a good deal *outgrown their cassocks*, the framers of the 22nd article have perhaps the advantage on the score of *charity*.

But I will just suppose, Sir, as a further illustration of what I have asserted with respect to the meaning of the 22nd. article, that the circumstances of

the church had rendered it necessary or expedient to disclaim the *metempsychosis*, and that, consequently, a 40th article had been added, to the following effect, viz. :—

“The Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls is a vain thing, and contrary to Scripture.”

Now suppose, Sir, that after a lapse of more than two hundred years, during which this has been received by the Church as the authoritative condemnation of the fanciful belief in question, some zealous clergyman and ingenious casuist, having been appointed to an Indian chaplaincy, repairs to Bengal, and in the intervals of his pastoral functions, endeavours to make himself acquainted with the peculiar tenets of Brahminism. He traces to its source and authorities the pious repugnance to animal food which is, we are told, always exhibited by every orthodox Brahmin ;—and as there is nothing very decisive in Scripture on the subject of the *immediate* state of the soul after death, he begins to think that the Indian doctrine may *possibly* be true. On his return to England, he hints his belief, or at least his doubts, to some of his friends. They, naturally enough, refer him to “article 40,” which they conceive, has settled the point. What is his reply? “My good friends, what the Church here condemns is not the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, *simpliciter*,—but the *Pythagorean* doctrine of the transmigration of souls. *Non constat* that the framers of article 40, by particularizing the peculiar heresy of Pythagoras, may not have meant to imply a belief in the system adopted by Brahma. Why condemn Py-



thagoras alone, if you mean at the same time, to censure every other version of the *metempsychosis*? *Expressio unius est exclusio alterius.*”

I suspect, Sir, that in the case I have put, such reasoning would not be looked upon as very satisfactory by the ecclesiastical superiors of the theorist whom I have imagined. But the argument is identical, *in terms*, with that to which you resort on the present occasion.

But you say that “by the *Romish doctrine* is not meant the Tridentine statement, because this article was drawn up before the decree of the Council of Trent; what is opposed is the *received doctrine* of the day, and *unhappily of this day too*, &c.” (p. 24.) How touching is this lament over an assumed and supposititious fact! the belief in which, on the part of your Protestant readers, may be useful in averting their censures from *you* personally, to those whose real doctrine on this point is, you are well aware, identical with that which you are defending. I now ask you, Sir, is it, or is it not the fact, that the decrees of the Council of Trent in matters of faith are received universally as *the truth* throughout the Roman Catholic Church? *You dare not gainsay it.* I ask you again, whether the decree which you have cited at p. 24 is not a decree concerning a matter of faith? “*Due honor and veneration is to be paid to them, (images), not that we believe that any divinity or virtue is in them, for which they should be worshipped; or that we should ask anything of them; or that trust should be*



*reposed in images, as formerly was done by the Gentiles, which used to place their hopes in idols."* Can it be denied that this is a decree explaining and defining the orthodox faith on this point? Assuredly not. Is not this therefore one of those doctrines which are *universally received* by us? And is it not in *direct contradiction* to the doctrine which you are, for your own purposes, endeavouring to fasten upon us? You *cannot* deny that the decree in question is one which every Roman Catholic is bound to receive *under pain of spiritual rebellion and heterodoxy*. How then, I ask you solemnly—I adjure you to say, as you shall answer before God—how can you reconcile it to your sense of duty as a Christian, to your conscience as an honest man, to assert that the condemned doctrine is the *received* doctrine of this day in the Roman Catholic Church?

You will tell me, I presume, that you have yourself seen, or have conversed with persons who have seen, the peasantry of Italy or Spain prostrating themselves before the image of the Virgin, or the Saints, &c. Now, Sir, giving you the full benefit of such demonstrations, and admitting, (which I assuredly only do for the sake of the argument,) that the prayers offered up in presence of, and not *to*, those images, are such as are inconsistent with the doctrine laid down by the Council of Trent,—what would this prove? Simply that these misguided people were bad Roman Catholics, departing in the most flagrant manner, though, no doubt, unwittingly, from that faith which they are

bound to hold. The matter would amount to no more than this, viz. that there are in "Popish" Italy or Spain, many professing Roman Catholics, who, from the want of proper orthodox instruction, believe doctrines unsanctioned and condemned by their Church. And this I think may indeed be highly probable ; especially when I see that in Protestant England, and in the heart of orthodox Oxford, there are so many *professing* Church-of-England men, who maintain doctrines apparently so inconsistent with the articles which they have subscribed.

Equally unfair and libellous is your representation of our doctrine concerning purgatory. You would fain lead your readers to suppose that, according to our notions, it was a place where those "*who had lived and died in the wrath of God,*" might gain pardon through the prayers of the Church. (p. 26.) That such is *not* our belief, I need not inform *you*, because your allusion to the decree of the Council of Trent on the subject, clearly proves that *you know* the contrary to be the fact. "On the other hand," you say, (p. 26.), "the Council of Trent, and Augustin and Cyprian, so far as they express or imply any opinion approximating to that of the Council, hold purgatory to be a place for *believers*, not unbelievers, not where men who *have lived and died in God's wrath* may gain pardon, but where those who have already been pardoned in this life, may be cleansed and purified for beholding the face of God."

That this is the orthodox belief of the Roman

Catholic Church, is beyond dispute. The state of Purgatory, whatever it may be,—and perhaps the Church has not very distinctly defined it—has never, I will fearlessly assert, been represented by any Catholic writer, as the condition of those, *who, dying in unrepented mortal sin*, are supposed to have incurred a sentence of eternal reprobation; and assuredly, Sir, you are the first antagonist of the Catholics, who has ever ventured to charge them with a disbelief in the eternity of those torments to which the “unrighteous Christian” may unhappily be condemned. “Let it be considered then,” you say, “whether, on the whole, the Romish doctrine of purgatory, which the article condemns, and which was generally believed in the Roman Church *three centuries ago as well as now*, viewed in its essence, be not the doctrine that the punishment of unrighteous Christians is temporary, not eternal.”—(p. 28.)

It is in vain, Sir, that you cite passages from Jeremy Taylor, or lucubrations from the pen of an ingenious and imaginative gentleman, hitherto unknown to Fame, of the name of Johnson, to prove that knavish impostors, or stupid fanatics, have from time to time degraded the sanctity of their Religion, and defaced the purity of its Creed, by unseemly fables and legendary absurdities, invented with a view of working on the minds and exciting the superstitious terrors of the vulgar. Such flights of fancy, in religious matters, are, no doubt, as injurious in point of moral effect, as they are detestable in point of taste and decorum; but



until you can cite some binding ecclesiastical authority which forces us to receive the nightmare rhapsodies of Mr. Johnson, as the orthodox faith of the Church,—it would be quite as much to the purpose, to extract long passages from the “*Purgatorio*” of Dante, and hold them up to the world, as the “received doctrine” of the Church in the present day !

The next point which you discuss, Sir, or rather which you strive to elucidate by long extracts from Bishop Burnet and Jeremy Taylor, is the subject of indulgences, or as the article calls them, “pardons,”—a favorite theme of vituperation and misrepresentation with the opponents of the Catholic Religion. That gross and scandalous abuses, connected with this part of our system, had crept into the practice of the Church, and been suffered to disgrace its *discipline*, before the Reformation, nobody pretends to deny ; that an indulgence ever was, as you would have it believed,—a remission of the guilt of *past*—or a licence for the commission of *future* sin, is utterly and flagrantly untrue!—It is nothing more than the remission of the *temporal* punishment, which, according to the practice and belief of the primitive Church, is supposed to remain still due to *sin*, after its *guilt*, and the sentence of eternal punishment incurred thereby, have *already* been remitted in the sacrament of penance. This punishment was, as correctly stated by Burnet, in the passage which you cite, (p. 28,) inflicted by the Church in early ages, in the shape of public penances of considerable severity; and of longer or shorter

duration. An indulgence dispenses with the performance of this canonical penance, and remits the punishment which it would otherwise have inflicted, or for which it was considered an equivalent. But,—and here I shall take the liberty of quoting the words of Dr. Wiseman—a higher authority with regard to our faith and practice, than either Dr. Burnet or Jeremy Taylor :—

“ The Church always makes and has made confession and communion, and consequent exemption from the guilt of sin, an indispensable condition for receiving an indulgence ;” (Lectures, vol. ii. p. 83 ;) and every Catholic knows that “without a *penitent confession* of his sins, and the *worthy participation* of the blessed Eucharist, no indulgence is anything worth.” —(Ibid. p. 90.)

I am not now entering into the defence of the doctrine of indulgences, with the merits of which we have here nothing to do. I am merely stating *what an indulgence is* ; and I have stated enough to show that it is in perfect accordance with the practice which Bishop Burnet cites as that of the primitive Church, and that nothing can be more grossly incorrect than the view which the Tract, on his notable authority, would give of the subject.

So, also, in speaking of the invocation of Saints, you charge the Roman Catholic Church with “actually teaching” its disciples to address the Saints in a manner which “entrenches upon the incommunicable honour due to God alone,” at the same time that you



cite a decree of the Council of Trent, clearly pointing out and marking the wide distinction between the worship which the Church pays to Almighty God, and the honour and observance which that Council, as explaining and fixing the doctrine of the Church on this point, authorizes us to offer to the Saints.— (p. 41.)

I repeat again, that it is a contradiction *in terms* to say that the Roman Catholic Church teaches, or *can teach any doctrine* inconsistent with the decrees of Trent in such matters ; and the assertion, that on some points they are occasionally forgotten or disregarded, goes to prove no more than that there are Roman Catholics, as there are Protestants, or members of the Church of England, both priests and laymen, ignorant of much that they ought to know, and oblivious of many things which they ought to remember.

Rely upon it, Sir, there is no use in endeavouring to conceal, either from yourself or others, the undoubted fact that from the moment when you admit the doctrines and authority of the Council of Trent, you are, in belief, as complete a *Roman Catholic* as the Archbishop of Paris, or Doctor Murray himself, and, as far as *faith* is concerned, satisfy every term of the definition with most philosophical and logical nicety.

As to the practice of invoking the Saints, the most common form of address to the Blessed Virgin, is, as you are aware, the “Ave,” or “Hail Mary,” in which we first use the words of salutation employed by the Angel Gabriel, in announcing her glorious destiny to



the future mother of our Lord,—followed by the blessing addressed to her by St. Elizabeth,—and finally entreat her to “pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death.” This is unquestionably the *text*, or if I may be allowed the expression, the *key-note* of all the homage paid in our Church to the blessed Virgin. I am aware that in some anthems or formularies of very remote antiquity, still occasionally in use in the Church service, in which Mary is apostrophised, expressions occur here and there, which in *their garbled state* (as served up by Bishop Andrews, in the passage cited, p. 41,) and *without the context*, may seem in some degree to require the benefit of Bellarmine’s explanation, (cited by you at p. 42,) which is satisfactory as to the sense in which such language is used, although certainly not as to the expediency of employing it. These expressions are indeed, “*few and far between*,” and have no doubt been suffered to remain for centuries unnoticed in our liturgy, because it never occurred to any person who used them, that they could be taken in any sense inconsistent with the real doctrine of the Church, or be supposed to “entrench on the incommunicable honour due to God alone;” a fact of which any candid person who reads the *entire passages* in which they occur, may easily persuade himself.

It seems, however, that the same species of invocation which “entrenches on the incommunicable honour due to God alone,” when employed by a Roman Catholic, is not “fond” but perfectly orthodox, when

it proceeds from a Bishop of the Church of England. Thus speaks Bishop Ken, as quoted by you with evident approbation, (p. 37.)

“ O may my guardian while I sleep,  
Close to my bed his vigils keep !  
His love angelical *instil*,  
Stop all the avenues of ill.” &c.

Alas, Sir—

“ Quam temerè in nosmet legem sancimus iniquam !”

When did the enthusiastic or hyperbolical language of pious veneration ever suggest to a Roman Catholic, addressing the Blessed Virgin, language more closely “entrenching on the incommunicable honour due to God alone,” than that in which the Right Reverend and orthodox prelate applies for the assistance of his guardian angel ! What ! can any *created being*, by supernatural power, *instil* “his love angelical” into the human mind ? Does it belong even to an angel, *ex mero motu*, to “stop all the avenues of ill ;” and are we allowed to pray that he may do this, when we may apply directly to Almighty God for protection ? Surely the Bishop’s language is open to this species of animadversion. What then ?—Do *I* mean to accuse him of seriously believing that any blessing could be bestowed, or danger averted by the Angel, irrespectively of the power and will of the Almighty ? God forbid that I should do so foul a wrong to one whom I doubt not

to have been a pious and exemplary Christian !—But the liberal interpretation which I freely concede to his Lordship's questionable phraseology, I claim, in common candour and honesty, for the venerable authors of much pious but injudicious doggrel, with which the psalmody of the early Church has undoubtedly been encumbered. To quote once more the words of a heathen poet, from whom we have received some lessons of good sense and mutual forbearance not unworthy of the attention and imitation, even of Christian controversialists :—

“ Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.”

Before I leave this branch of the subject, Sir, let me remind you, that the greater part of that beautiful and impressive portion of your Church service, called the “Litany” is *verbatim* the Catholic “Litany of the Saints,” *minùs the Saints* ; and if the Protestant reader of these pages will only supply between the words “*Holy Trinity one God, have mercy upon us!*” and the words, “*Be merciful unto us, spare us, oh Lord!*” the names of some seventy or eighty saints or companies of men or women by our Church reputed holy, with just so many repetitions of the words “Pray for us !” he will have a perfectly correct idea of the *real* nature of the “*worship*” we offer to the saints.

Your next section, Sir, (7, p. 43,) relates to the Sacraments. Our Church says that a Sacrament is “an outward sign of inward grace ;” and that there are seven of them. You are of opinion that there



*may be seven*, and that, at all events, the 25th article only meant to deny that "Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are Sacraments in the sense in which Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are Sacraments," that is, "Sacraments of the Gospel—Sacraments *with an outward sign, ordained of God.*"—(p. 43.) The article asserts that the five rites in question are "such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles," &c. There is, however, according to your notion, nothing in the article absolutely negative of the fact, that they are, or may be Sacraments, and, consequently, "outward signs of inward grace;" a definition in which both Churches concur. I shall only observe, with regard to this, that "*an outward sign of inward grace,*" springing from "*the corrupt following of the Apostles,*" is a *novelty* if not an anomaly, in any religious dispensation.

We now, Sir, arrive at "Transubstantiation," sect. 8. (p. 47.) And here I certainly cannot follow you through the abstruse metaphysical reasoning by which you endeavour to reconcile your avowed belief in the "*Real Presence*" with the emphatic denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation contained in the 28th Article. I could have wished, however, that you had cited the definition given by the Council of Trent, as the authorized doctrine of the Catholic Church, instead of favouring us, on the authority of Jeremy Taylor, with the opinions of Alanus or Bellarmine on this matter. The doctrine of the Catholic Church unquestionably asserts *an entire change of the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood*

*of our Lord.* This is what we believe ; but we are certainly not called upon to enter into such irreverent *minutiæ*, or subtle details in assertion of our belief, as those into which the polemical zeal of the two last-named theologians appears to have led them. The discussions about figure, extension, &c., in treating of the mode in which this ineffable and divine mystery, as we consider it, is effected, are as useless as they are unedifying ; nor are we required to follow them through their various intricacies. The Church is not bound by the individual interpretation of Alanus or Bellarmine ; although, *if their doctrines do not contradict her authoritative decrees*, they may, very naturally, have passed uncensured. It is not for me to pronounce on their orthodoxy ; but I leave it to yourself to decide how far they are or are not consistent with the following passages from the hymn sung by our Church, on Corpus Christi-day, in honour of the blessed Sacrament, and which must obviously be held to contain a perfectly correct account of the orthodox belief concerning it.

“ A sumente non concisus,  
Non confractus, non divisus,  
Integer accipitur.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fracto demum sacramento,  
Ne vacilles, sed memento,  
Tantum esse sub fragmento  
Quantum toto tegitur.

Nulla rei fit scissura ;  
Signi tantum fit fractura,  
Quâ nec status, nec statura  
Signati minuitur !”



It seems, however, that you think the Article does not deny “every kind of change;” from which I think I am fairly led to imply, that *you* believe *some change* does take place in the sacred elements by the effect of the words of consecration. At p. 55, you say: “The body and blood of Christ may be *really, literally* present in the holy Eucharist, yet not having become present by *local passage*, may still *literally* and really be on God’s right hand.” Again, p. 56: “Now this is what the Catholic Church seems to hold concerning our Lord’s presence in the Sacrament, that *He then personally* and bodily is with us in the *way an object is which we call present*. How is he so, we know not,” &c. And at p. 58, we have these words: “Let them but believe and act on the truth, *that the consecrated bread is Christ’s body, as He says.*”

Now, Sir, I shall only remark, that if the words of consecration *effect a change* in the bread and wine,—if Christ is “*personally and bodily* with us,” in the Sacrament of the altar, “in the way an object is which we call present,”—and if the consecrated bread *be* Christ’s body—all this implies a mystery so nearly identical with the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, that it requires metaphysical perceptions of a very acute character, to discover the boundary line which separates the two modes of faith from each other.

Your next section, p. 59, relates to “Masses,” as mentioned in Article 31; and you are of opinion that, by the Masses, which that Article treats as “*blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits*,” it was not meant



“to condemn the creed of the Roman Church,” but certain errors or abuses which then existed, or were supposed to exist, therein. We do certainly hold, in your words, that the Mass is a commemorative offering for the quick and the dead, for the remission of sins, (p. 63.) We also undoubtedly maintain, with the Council of Trent, “that the fruits of the bloody sacrifice are through this most abundantly obtained, so far is the latter from detracting, in any way, from the former.” (Ibid.) Nor is it assuredly, according to us, “independent of the Sacrifice on the Cross,” of which it is a perpetual and daily recurring memorial, as our service abundantly demonstrates. If this doctrine be indeed consistent with the 31st Article, I am well pleased that it should be so; but I own that I should never have discovered the accordance by my own unassisted powers of reasoning.

With regard to the 32nd Article, on the marriage of the clergy, I freely concede to you that “there is no subject for controversy in the words.” (p. 64.) The celibacy of the clergy is strictly a point of discipline, which is not even uniform throughout the Catholic Church. Married men are admitted to holy orders in the Greek or Armenian section of the Church. I am not here speaking of what is commonly called the Greek Church, viz. the religion of Russia, and, I believe, of most of the Christian inhabitants of Greece and Turkey in Europe; but of that large portion of the Catholic Church which follows the Armenian ritual, but is still considered and treated as orthodox in point

of faith by the see of Rome, with which it is in communion, and whose ecclesiastical supremacy it fully recognizes.

The celibacy of the clergy, therefore, although at present enforced, as a matter of discipline, in that branch of the Catholic Church which follows the Roman ritual, is no integral part of our system, and, whatever may have been said or written on the subject, constitutes no vital point of controversy between the Church of England and the Catholics.

We now come, Sir, to the 35th Article, relating to the 2nd book of Homilies, which it asserts to contain "a good and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times," (p. 66.) The last expression is certainly remarkable; for if the doctrine *be true*, one does not very well see why it is more necessary at one time than at another. That doctrine which teaches the Christian faith, must be necessary *at all times*; and the doctrine which is contrary thereto, cannot be necessary *at any time*. My present business, however, is not with the Articles, but their commentator, and here I have but little to say.

I do not certainly quarrel with you for refusing to believe, on the authority of the second book of Homilies, that the Pope is Antichrist; but I cannot help wishing that the spirit of liberal interpretation, which you claim your right to exercise in this instance, were more generally admitted where *our* faith and practice are concerned. The College of Maynooth is assailed by the press, and in the House of Commons, as in-



stilling diabolical principles into the minds of its *alumni*, because there are to be found in its library, or perhaps in its course of theology, certain voluminous works containing stray opinions on the subject of heresy, and the treatment of its professors, which are repugnant to the first principles of humanity;—opinions eagerly disclaimed and disavowed by every Roman Catholic, and solemnly abjured by the members of our religion, with the sanction, and on the authority of the first Theological Faculties in Europe. But what, think you, would have been recently the vantage-ground of Mr. Colquhoun and Serjeant Jackson, if they could have cited a passage to the following effect, in some formulary of our faith, which every Irish Catholic clergyman was bound to subscribe, viz., “The seventh volume of Dr. Dens’s works, contains a good and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times.” Would not Dr. Murray’s attempts to repudiate the doctrines in question be treated as jesuitical?

Now I, for one, would say to the directors or heads of Maynooth: “In God’s name, purge your library of these abominations—expunge from your editions of works which *may be* useful and orthodox in their general tendency, and on strictly controversial points, such doctrines as these, which you neither teach nor defend, but, on the contrary, vehemently disclaim.” But if, from bibliopolic veneration for the *un-Bowdlerized* purity of an original text, or from any other crotchet of ecclesiastical *étiquette*, they neglect to do so, and content themselves with denying that they are



bound by the particular notions of the individual writers in question, on points connected rather with the intercourse of social life, or civil government, than with religious faith and practice, they are certainly still entitled to the full benefit of that indulgence which you claim, and justly claim, in your interpretation of a work stamped with the most solemn sanction of your Church.

With respect to the 38th article, viz. "The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England," (p. 80.) as you have forborne from assailing or exaggerating our belief on this point, I have no right to complain of the view which you take of the Pope's ecclesiastical position. It is something that you consider him to be "the head of the Catholic world," (p. 78.) and concede to him "a primacy of order," (ibid.) This is at least civil language, which is more than our chief bishop generally meets with from Protestant authorities, and fully as much as can be expected from a minister of that church which recognises her Majesty as its spiritual head.

I have now, Sir, followed you, with more or less of regularity and detail, through most of the questions which your tract discusses; and if I have been obliged, in so doing, to convict you of a strong tendency to Roman Catholicism in your doctrines, it is because I had no other way of vindicating myself and my fellow-catholics from foul and grievous imputations which bigoted ignorance may well be prompt to cast upon us, but which *your* more accurate knowledge of facts

and authorities should have disdained to sanction. God knows we have much of contumely and hostility to endure, in our native land, for the sake of those venerated and sublime doctrines and rites, which we openly avow and practise,—which we are ever ready to explain and defend ! But though willing calmly to encounter the worst that can befall us in the cause of what we hold to be THE TRUTH, we will not quietly submit to be made answerable for obsolete abuses or falsely imputed error. We can easily disregard the taunts of the infidel, the sneers of the Deist, or the shallow arguments of the Socinian, when directed against our orthodox faith ; but we may be allowed to feel, and we are called upon emphatically to express a just indignation, when we find *those very men* whose theological researches have brought them round *most reluctantly*, to a belief *nearly identical with our own*, eschewing our spiritual fellowship as if it were contamination,—charging us with idolatry in our faith, blasphemy in our prayers, and “*impurity*” (!) in our rites ; and degrading us, in the eyes of our fellow-Christians and countrymen, to the level of the worshippers of Dagon and Jagernaut—the priests of Cybele or Cotytto !

One word more, and I have done. However strongly I may have expressed myself in the preceding pages, I most sincerely trust that I have said nothing which can be construed as hostile or irreverent towards the Church of England. As the religion of my sovereign, my country, and my

friends, that church may well claim, and shall always receive at my hands, every degree of cordial respect and observance which may be consistent with a conscientious adherence to the ancient faith from which, on some points, she dissents. I do full justice to the purity of her moral doctrine and discipline, to the beauty and dignity of her liturgy, (taken, as it is, almost entirely from our own,) to the sincere piety and Christian zeal which animate a vast proportion of her followers, to the learning and apostolic virtues of very many among her pastors and hierarchy. Far, very far, be it from me to widen the breach between the two religions whose respective doctrines are undoubtedly much more nearly assimilated than is generally known or acknowledged. No man would more rejoice than myself at the prospect of a union between the churches; although I confess, that, with regard to this point, the fears so generally entertained on one side, and the hopes occasionally expressed on the other, appear to me perfectly visionary and puerile.

If, however, such a result were morally or politically *possible*—if my sincere and straightforward countrymen should ever consent to be reunited in faith to the centre of Catholic unity, they will not, I am satisfied, be *conjured* back into the circle of orthodoxy by any feat of ecclesiastical *leger-de-main*, but will unhesitatingly renounce those opinions which calm inquiry may have convinced them to be erroneous—and instead of straining the Thirty-nine Articles into a forced and paradoxical accordance with the decrees of Trent,



boldly determine to make an honest election between them.

I remain, Reverend Sir, with much respect,

Your obedient humble servant,

AN ENGLISH CATHOLIC.

8th April, 1841.

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